

## **Placing the Order**

by Emily Lazar

ghost water in muddy stream banks,  
send me help in a box untied  
don't break my fine lines like they're  
toothpicks and fishing wire, instead  
unseal for me some potential  
and float it from the shingled coast  
tonight on warm-water winds, from  
ports where words are bought  
and bottled, the ripest, the richest  
I paid, I placed an order, I'm  
expecting one ingenious stanza  
to replace the one that fell away  
from the middle of my latest  
endeavor

for the price I paid  
I hope to be able to tack  
this new one over the empty,  
bald spot on my stationery,  
but you need to slip loose the knots  
on the water-tight floating box  
so that the contents can absorb  
the night-owl calls and egg-white steam  
of your current and be sure to  
let it breathe, let its ribbons trail  
and swim in black transparency  
among the fishes and the murk-  
stained water-stars, but that is all  
because you must also preserve  
what I've had packed and shipped for me

I place my trust in the placid  
caress and direction of your  
insubstantial limbs, ghost water,  
be kind and don't break what I've bought  
you can tell from my address I  
don't have much out here but the mud  
and my fishing pole and sunken  
dock planks wrecked in mist-muck and  
that is where I'll wait  
all night if I have to, I have to